Syria - Conflict

ETC User Feedback Survey results

Survey period 19/11/18 to 31/12/18

Syria is one of the most complex and dynamic humanitarian crises in the world today. As the Syria crisis enters its eighth year, 13.5 million people require humanitarian assistance, including 4.6 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Over half of the population has been forced from their homes, and many people have been displaced multiple times.

In addition, humanitarian access to people in need in Syria remains constrained by the ongoing conflict.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in Syria on 14 January 2013 to provide shared security telecommunications and internet connectivity services to the humanitarian community responding to the crisis. The ETC is operating under the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria.

The ETC conducted a User Feedback Survey between November and December 2018 to assess the quality of the existing Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services among humanitarians in the eleven common operational areas where the ETC provides its services: Aleppo, Al Qamishli, Damascus, Homs and Tartous (Syria); Amman (Jordan); Beirut (Lebanon); Antakya, Gaziantep, Kilis and Sanliurfa (Turkey). The survey also aimed at identifying areas of improvement in line with evolving needs on the ground. The results will help the ETC to better understand the needs of humanitarians responding to this emergency.

Overview and Methodology

The survey comprised 12 questions and was launched on 19 November 2018. The invitation was shared among the ETC field offices and end users of ETC services.

Although the initial deadline of the survey was 17 December 2018, the ETC extended the deadline for two additional weeks to allow humanitarians to share their feedback. The survey was closed on 31 December 2018.

33 humanitarians responded to the survey. All respondents represented staff from United Nations (UN) agencies (100%). The majority of respondents (79%) have been involved in the Syria operation for over six months.

The relatively low response rate to this survey suggests that results may not be representative of all ETC users.

Key Findings

Existing ETC Services

The ETC User Feedback Survey resulted in an overall user satisfaction rate of 86% for the core ETC services provided in the country. The survey highlighted:

- **91.3%** satisfaction rate for **Internet** services.

- **90.9%** satisfaction rate for **Very High Frequency (VHF) radio and Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio** services.

- **72.2%** satisfaction rate for **High Frequency (HF) radio** services.

- **88.9%** satisfaction rate for **Radio Programming** services.

- **85.7%** satisfaction rate for **Radio Training** services.

- **89.5%** satisfaction rate for **ICT Helpdesk** services.

Rating of each ETC service by user satisfaction
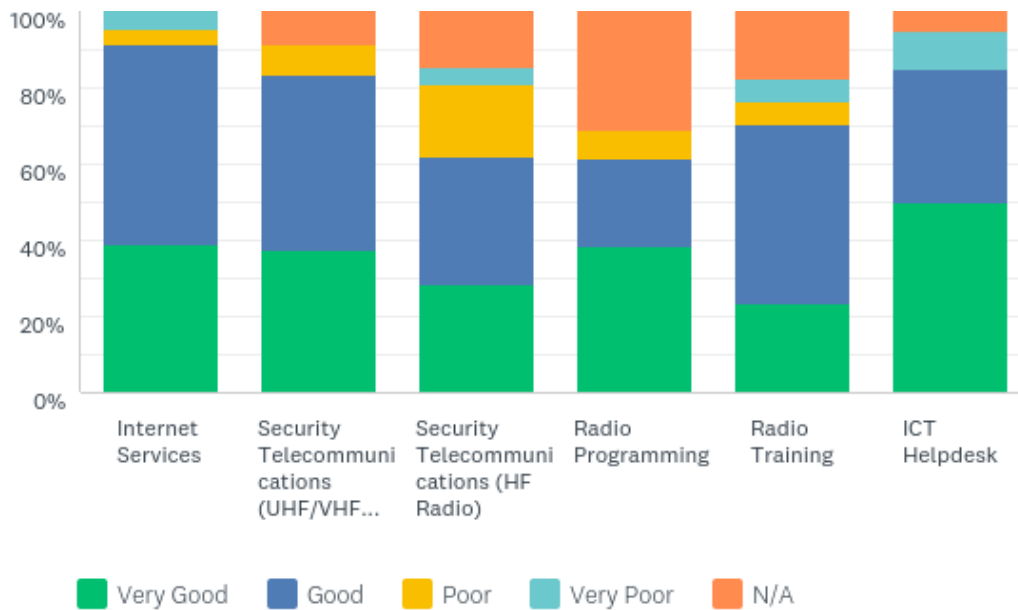
The following additional comments from 2 responders included:

- A need for more reliable HF radio services during field missions;
- A more responsive ICT Helpdesk.

ETC Services Required

The ETC asked the humanitarian community about what services they require to support their operations on the ground (respondents could choose multiple options):

Syria:

- Out of the humanitarians who expressed a need for ETC services in **Aleppo**, Internet services were highlighted as the most needed service (33%) as well as radio training (17%), voice services (17%), HF radio services (17%) and basic business services (17%);
- Radio training (40%), Internet services (20%), voice services (20%) and HF radio services (20%) were indicated by the humanitarians in **Al Qamishli** as the most critical;
- In **Damascus**, respondents showed a need for UHF/VHF and HF radio services (17%), radio programming (17%) and radio training (17%). There is also a need for ICT helpdesk support (8%), voice services (8%), charging stations (8%) and basic business services (8%);
- Humanitarians mainly expressed a need for Internet services (23%) in **Homs**. They also expressed a need for HF radio and radio programming (15%), and ICT helpdesk support, voice services, UHF/VHF radio, radio training, charging stations and basic business services (8%);
- In **Tartous**, 33% of humanitarians confirmed the need for HF radio services and 33% for radio training, 17% the need for Internet services and 17% UHF/VHF radio services.

Turkey:

- In **Antakya**, respondents showed a need for UHF/VHF and HF radio services (17%), radio programming (17%) and radio training (17%). There is also a need for ICT helpdesk support (8%), voice services (8%), charging stations (8%) and basic business services (8%);
- Out of the humanitarians who expressed a need for ETC services in **Gaziantep**, Internet services were highlighted as the most needed service (16%). Also highlighted was ICT helpdesk services (12%), voice services, UHF/VHF and HF radio services (12% each), radio programming (12%) and also radio training, charging stations and basic business services (8% each);
- Internet services (20%) were indicated by the humanitarians in **Kilis** as the most critical. The remaining responses indicated all other services–ICT helpdesk, voice services, UHF/VHF radio, HF radio, radio programming, radio training, charging stations and basic business services–as 10% equally;
- Humanitarians expressed a need for all services (11% each) in **Sanliurfa.**

Jordan:

- In **Amman**, 1 respondent expressed the need for basic business services.

Lebanon:

- In **Beirut**, there were too few respondents to give a meaningful statistic on the need for ETC services.

Coordination and Information Management (IM)

- Over 60% of respondents confirmed they are not aware of any of the ETC Coordination services including Global ETC, ETC updates during Logistics Sector meetings, Information Management services and local ICT working group meetings. The majority of those who are aware of the ETC Coordination services found the meeting facilitation, frequency of the meetings, topics discussed and the availability of the ETC team to be generally satisfactory;
- Less than a quarter of respondents are familiar with ETC IM products such as meeting minutes, dashboards, factsheets and situation reports. Those who are familiar with the ETC IM products mainly found them to be 'good' or 'very good';
- Only 29% of the respondents confirmed they have visited the ETCluster.org website.

As the survey was not sent to the local ICT working group or to management operating in Syria and the surrounding countries, awareness of ETC coordination services within the survey respondents (primarily end users of ETC services) was predictably low. The ETC team chose to approach the end users of ETC services, the majority of who are not involved in coordination discussions, but who remain key to the provision of feedback. Widening the target group of respondents will be addressed in the 2019 ETC Syria user satisfaction report.

Additional Feedback

The following additional comments/feedback from 13 responders suggested that the ETC:

- Conduct more radio training;
- Engage relevant staff with ETC activities;
- Increase communications efforts on the ground on ETC services available for the humanitarian community including increased promotion of the ETC and its role, services and activities;
- Check equipment once it has been installed to ensure effectiveness on the ground.

Next Steps

The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve the existing services in Syria and to provide an improved response to emerging challenges, including future emergencies. The demand for increased radio communication training opportunities and improved HF services will be taken into account in forthcoming plans to extend the security communications network in Syria. In addition, the team is engaging with the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project which assists the humanitarian community in various countries by identifying and implementing the most appropriate security communications solution(s), in strong collaboration with UNDSS.

The gaps identified in this survey will be analysed and included in the ETC workplan for Syria as appropriate.

This report will be shared with responders, users and partners of the ETC services in Syria, the Global ETC partnership network, World Food Programme (WFP) Syria (as local lead of the ETC), the Syria inter-cluster coordination group and the Syria Humanitarian Country Team. It will also be published on the ETC website, accessible to the wider public.

All information related to the ETC operation in Syria can be found on the ETC website: www.etcluster.org/emergencies/syria-conflict

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Syria.ETC@wfp.org